



"Bohemia Libre"

After a year of pleading, training, and hoping, only garbled messages and a crescendo of rumors

CUBA:

Playing for High Stakes

On both sides of the Caribbean curtain last week, Cubans celebrated the 62nd anniversary of the island's independence (May 20) from Spain with jittery gloom. Had "a new war of independence" begun, as the anti-Castro Revolutionary Junta (JURE) proclaimed? Had JURE's brilliant young leader, Manuel Ray, been captured by Castro's militia, as Cuban sources hinted? In both Miami and Havana, Cubans stayed glued to their radios hoping to find out—while most of the world seemed not to care.

To Castro's friends, Cuba's claims that it had been invaded seemed a raucous and dangerous exaggeration. Apparently egged on by Nikita Khrushchev himself, Yugoslavia's Tito, Algeria's Ben Bella, and Egypt's Nasser have reportedly told Castro to soften his propaganda and lay off the U.S. lest he jeopardize the prospects of an East-West détente. To Castro's enemies, meanwhile, talk of a new "invasion" was no more than a publicity stunt. It was as if all such talk, whether true or false, was only part of an intramural game.

Tough Promise: Unlike most games, however, this one has very high stakes. If, for example, Ray kept his overly publicized promise to return to Cuba by its independence day, he would prove that neither Castro's twenty Russian-built, radar-equipped torpedo boats, nor his 100 or more Russian MIG's, nor his armies of shore-patrolling militiamen are insurmountable obstacles. Other exile groups would then probably soon follow suit. And, if Ray manages to set up a guerrilla operation in some Cuban sierra, the rest of the numerous exile groups may yet put an end to their feuds and unite behind him. At that point, the U.S. and other hemisphere nations could then offer Ray official

recognition, rendering it meaningful with arms and aid.

If, on the other hand, Ray fails, the exiles may give up completely, leaving the U.S. with only one alternative: co-existence with Cuba. That, of course, is what Castro wants; he has been seeking an "agreement" with the U.S. for some time and last week, according to one report, he was trying to get Spain to act as go-between. In any case, Ray's capture would obviously represent a severe blow to all anti-Castroites since his JURE, though perhaps too radical to suit U.S. taste, is by far the most respected exile group in Latin America.

Ignored and Scorned: Ray did not have such respect a year ago. Ignored by the CIA for having fought with Castro against Batista, scorned by Manuel Artime, the CIA-backed chief of the Bay of Pigs invasion, and distrusted by most Cuban exiles for his left-of-center political philosophy (they called it "fidelismo without Fidel"), Ray had to spend a full twelve months rallying significant support. Together with his chief aide, Rogelio Cisneros, Ray journeyed from Puerto Rico to the U.S. and Venezuela pleading his cause.

He wanted his movement, Ray said, to be organized, controlled, and led by Cubans, not by the CIA. He wanted Cuba to have a democratic regime, not a new form of Batista tyranny. He wanted to keep many of Castro's reforms—including an important part of the crucial land reform—not give the country back to its old exploiters. Backed at last by the liberal leaders of Venezuela and Costa Rica, and by Puerto Rico's Gov. Luis Muñoz Marín, Ray built up his organization, trained troops in New York basements and Central American fields, and finally won support from most Cuban democrats. Last week, his supporters claimed, he went ashore to fight in Cuba.

He was apparently not alone. Other groups were also said to have gone

ashore. Troop movements were reported almost everywhere in Cuba. Intra-island radio messages were frantic—and garbled. Rumors succeeded rumors in a crescendo of tension: Ray was safe, Ray was captured, Ray was shot, Ray was not even in Cuba. Not since the 1961 invasion had Cubans so anxiously waited for news—but none came.

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